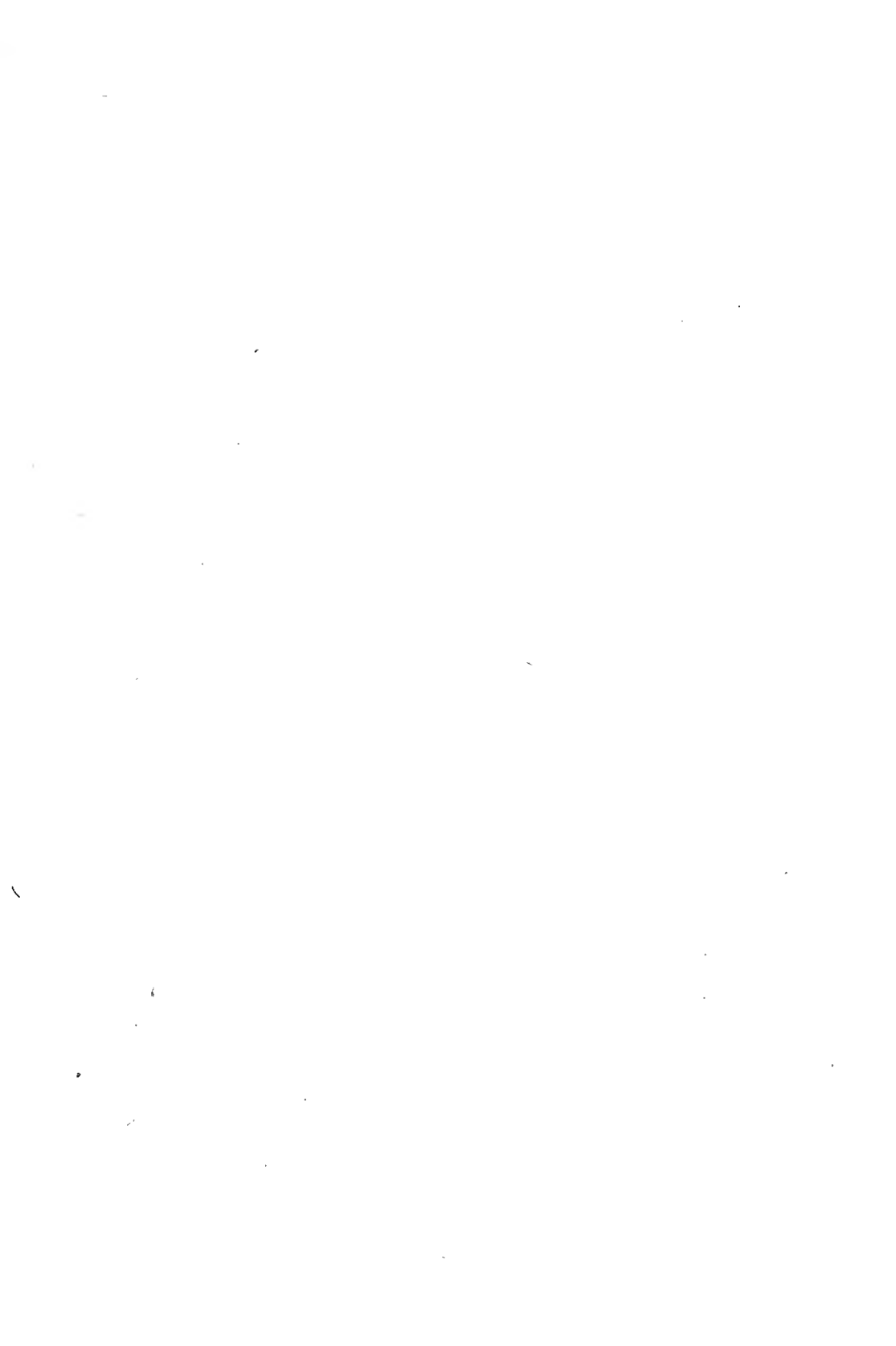




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ON THE
CRUCIFIXION
AND
RESURRECTION.

A
P O E M.

By JAMES OGDEN,

AUTHOR of the BRITISH LION ROUZ'D.

L O N D O N :

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A PLAIN narration of matters of fact, is perhaps the best method of clearing up the fundamentals we have received as Christians, whereof the chief is that of the Resurrection. The strongest evidence seems generally to be overlooked, and which strikes immediately on reading the texts of scripture set to musick in the Oratorio of Messiah : The composer having chosen the prophecies which point at the coming of Christ, for his first opening the performance ; those which speak of his birth, life, doctrine, and miracles, for the middle ; and those relative to his sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, and second coming, to conclude : introducing, in each of these, those texts from the New Testament, which shew the completion of each ; whence it appears what a close connexion there is between the canonical

nical books of the Jews and Christians. The latter of these, in this, have the testimony of their enemies, that such things were foretold long before they came to pass. And if we add to this, that the Jews are, according to their own prophecies, a vagabond people, we have an undeniable evidence, that some events, long since foretold in their books, are come to pass ; which is a strong presumption, that those regarding Christ as their expected Messiah, their rejecting him, and hence the conversion of pagan nations, whom they held in the utmost contempt, are truly foretold, and as wonderfully fulfilled.

Those scriptures, whether of the Old or New Testament, which relate to the Crucifixion and Resurrection, are here cast together : poetry may be subservient to religion, if well executed ; this is left to the public.



ON THE
CRUCIFIXION and RESURRECTION.

WHAT man is He, who weakly will aspire
 To canvas sacred text, as common truths,
 The 'webs of finite reas'ning; he but leaves
 The ark, and, flutt'ring, like the *Patriarch's* dove,
 Still wanders from his rest; till he returns
 To drench his wing in *Shilo's* brook, struck dumb
 Before the holy oracles of *God*.

Let who will seek to climb the giddy heights
 Fabled of that *Parnassian* Mount; to drink
 Of *Helicon's* intoxicating stream;
 Me shrubby *Olivet*, or *Gethsemane*
 May well suffice; where oft the Son of man,
 Nightly, in pray'r and solitude, expos'd
 His goodly lineaments; or let me seek
Calvary, and with Him embrace the cross:
 Haply the rueful sight of *Golgotha*
 May check the strain excursive, lest I sing
 Of light conceits, in looser measur'd verse.

Who's *This* that comes from *Edom*, on his way
 To *Bozra*, in the greatness of his strength
 Travailing? *This* that by *Himself* has wrought
 Salvation with his arm; is *This* the man
 Whose form and visage were so chang'd? Is *This*,
 In his humiliation, Him that stood
 And found no judgment, meekly while He gave
 His back up to the smiters, and his cheeks

To them that plucked off the hair, nor hid
 His face from shame and spitting? He who led
 The house of *Israel*, like a flock of sheep;
 Nor hunger'd they, nor thirsted, in their way
 Across the howling wilderness? *His* name
 What mortal, or his lin'age shall declare?
 Yet He was bruised for us, when his foul
 Was made a sacrifice for sin: He bore
 Our sorrows, and his stripes became our healing.

Wrestling with *Death*, behold the *Son of man*
 Hangs ignominious on the cross. The *Jews*
 Mock'd at his pangs; the foldiers, less concern'd,
 Were dicing for his seamless coat. The sun
 Shone in his strength: The moon wheel'd opposite
 Her perfect orb; now hast'ning to her wane:
 Behold she reddens! As a twinkling star
 First seen far off, and now extinct, He veils
 His glories! not in dim eclipse, but dark
 As that disastrous night, when *Memphis* mourn'd
 Her first-born smote of man and beast. The earth

Convuls'd, from all her firm foundations shook!
 The *Grave* gave up her dead! The solid rock,
 Torn from his base, with many a fearful crash
 Plung'd to the nether deep! while *Clamour* rode
 Triumphant on the foamy surge, and howl'd
 Among the billows! *Chaos* heard the noise,
 And from his dark pavilion, where he sits
 With sable-vested *Night*, responsive roar'd!

How long the *Grave* retain'd her prey, so long
 The *Deep* stood yawning for the wreck of worlds!
 But when the third morn rose, the doors of *Death*
 Burst, while an angel roll'd away the stone
 From the sepulchre; then the hardy *Roman*
 Shrunk from his post, who seldom shrunk, aghast!

Thenceforth, the sword was girded on thy thigh,
 O Thou most mighty! and thy right hand wrought
 Terrible things! Forth from his twanging bow
 The arrows flew abroad; a threefold store
 His never-failing quiver held; of steel

The first, of gold the next ; those, fatal oft
 To *Satan* and his legions ; these, in Heav'n
 Far-fam'd, the potent and triumphant arms
 Of flaming *Cherubim*. The third obtain'd
 A twofold temper, as the fervid ray
 Now kindles life, and now destroys : Of these
 A formidable store await the day,
 When, at the general marshment, *thy Hosts*,
 O God ! innumerable, range themselves
 Beneath their standards. That apostate crew
 Worshipp'd on earth as *Gods*, with sacrifice
 And solemn invocation, left their shrines,
 When He made bare his holy arm, and fled,
 With wounds, inflicted on their hinder parts,
 Transfix'd, the badge of shame perpetual : Hell
 Was stirr'd up to help them ; but they found
 In Hell no shelter from his rigid shafts !

O Grave, where is thy victory ! O Death,
 Where is thy sting ! Their teeth are broke ; by Him
 Spoiled, who us'd to take the spoil. *Abaddon*

Howl-

Howling, from all her depths ; “ my vanquish’d thrones
 “ Smite, with astonishment, their strengthless knees !”

Wond’ring the *Areopagite* exclaims,
 Or Nature’s *God* now suffers, or the world
 Hastes to it’s limit. For he found his art
 Of no effect ; though us’d to calculate
 With certainty Heav’n’s motions, and foretel
 Events. But now the moon held far aloof
 Her shadowy cone from earth’s accustom’d track
 Thro’ Heav’n’s cerulian fields ; nor less amaz’d
 The trembling Priest, who waiting in his course
 About the altar, saw the hallow’d veil
 Rent downward from the top, whence all disclos’d
 The Holiest : scarce inform’d of such disgrace
 The High-Priest, ere the soldiers, out of breath,
 Related what had past. All-pow’rful god
 Seal’d up their lips, and adding guilt to guilt,
 That hard’ned race His mission yet reject.

But

But those that trusted in Him, fore astound,
 Were scatter'd here and there; save that the chief
 Yet cherish'd hope, but scarce knew whence to wait
 Deliv'rance. Two now journey'd on their way
 Down to *Emmäus*. These together held
 Close Conference. Now *Cleophas* relates,
 To cheer the other, what, concerning *Christ*,
 He had both heard and seen. An angel told
 His birth to shepherds. From the distant east
 Kings came and worshipp'd, by a wond'rous star
 Led thro' the wilderness, till now it stood
 O'er *Bethlem*, where He lay. They saw, and fell
 Prostrate with offer'd gifts before the babe,
 Tho' meanly swath'd, and in a manger laid:
 As if his birth, an ignominious death
 Should signify. And scarce his mother clasp'd
 Her wond'rous offspring, ere the tyrant fought
 His life; nay, fought it in the streaming blood
 Of little innocents. But here forewarn'd,
 His parents to the land of *Egypt* fled,
 There sojourning awhile. And now they dwelt

At *Nazareth*: I knew Him then, a Youth
 Past common estimation wife and grave,
 But chearful in his aspect; with delight
 He seem'd to serve his parents, friends, nay all;
 Following his father's calling; soon in that
 He grew expert, for diligence and skill
 Esteem'd. By day he wrought, and then at night
 Read *Moses* and the Prophets; oft his lamp
 Burnt till the morning watch; and now inspir'd,
 He seem'd to give their meaning. Scarce of age
 Past twelve, when yearly, as the custom is,
 We worshipp'd at *Jerusalem*, He held
 Long disputation with the learned *Sages*;
 Exceeding all, for pertinence of words,
 And inference conclusive. All, amaz'd
 At his endowments, both of mind and person,
 Drank up, with list'ning ears, his honey'd speech,
 And gaz'd upon his goodly form. But soon
 His parents found Him; over-charg'd with care
 They sought Him thro' their kin, but here at last

Saw him engag'd, and tenderly rebuk'd ;
 Whom with mysterious words He answer'd mild.
 Subject to them, till, from the bloom of youth
 Passing to manhood, in his thirtieth year.

Since *that* his life was one continued train
 Of miracles, not such as might bespeak
 The insolence of pow'r, with cunning sleights
 Combin'd; but such as rather might evince
 Mercy on man's infirmities. We saw
 His Father's glory, lighting as a dove,
 And heard unutterable words; scarce heard
 Ere John bare witness—Lo! of whom I spake!
 Behold the Lamb of *God!* ordain'd to save
 His people from their sins : How fav'd, if now
 The light of *Israel* fails, and *David's* house
 Nearly extinct? but we are often us'd
 To disappointment. By His people seen
 A little season, when his light arose,
 And all expected he would shortly take
 The sceptre o'er *Judea* ; he was led

Into the desert, by a strange impulse:
 Unfed, save what by angels was supply'd,
 When forty days, and forty tedious nights,
 Were spent in cold and hunger. Sought the while
 Both by his mother, and a few sad friends,
 Who clave to Him, as one by whom we hop'd
 Deliv'rance from the iron yoke of *Cæsar*.
 Again appearing, now He manifests
 His Glory! when in *Galilee* he grac'd
 The marriage with his presence, into wine
 Turning pure water! hence his fame went forth
 Thro' all *Judea*; while the multitude,
 Following, heard his words, and saw his works.
 He cleans'd the lepers, with his hallow'd touch!
 Heal'd the diseased with a word! We fail'd
 Across the lake, where *Galilee* extends
 Her border, in the vessel tempest-toss'd:
 Great were our fears to perish. He the while
 Serenely slept. I saw, and yet retain
 His features; how compos'd! while, unadorn'd,
 About his shoulders flow'd the graceful curls

The sport of winds. Now, by our fears awoke,
 At his rebuke the sea and wind were hush'd!
 Landed at last, He nor refreshment sought,
 Nor change of raiment, though among the first
 To succour others wants, His own last serv'd.

Not far from thence abode, among the tombs,
 Two lunaticks, whom instant He releas'd
 From bondage, long by Satan held; who fought
 His suff'rance only to possess the swine;
 Which granted, down the yawning precipice
 They rush'd. Their keepers fled; and we, amaz'd,
 Saw in appearance here his strength put forth,
 More to evince his Pow'r, than evidence
 His usual Goodness: yet when we requir'd
 Fire, as *Elias* heretofore, from Heav'n,
 On those that held us in contempt, He check'd
 Our forward *Zeal*, as sent from *God* to save!
 To spend, and to be spent! to give his life
 A sacrifice for all! The Poor receiv'd
 His doctrine freely, and beheld His works.

The rulers yet, with *Pharisaic* pride,
 As *Galileans*, held us in contempt :
 Tho' present, when, obedient to his word,
 The paralytic rose, and to the house
 Bore off his bed ; or when the shrunken hand
 Was in their sight restor'd : for he no state
 Assum'd, to their hypocrisy averse ;
 Frequent reprov'd, when in the synagogues
 They pray'd and fasted to be seen of men.
 Himself with *Publicans* would oftentimes
 Confort the while, hence growing more contemn'd.

Yet some of these believe : among the chief
 He who receiv'd his daughter back to life
 Restor'd ! What wonder, when *his* garment's hem
 Emitted virtue, whence the woman staunch'd
 Her issue ! whom distinguish'd in the throng
 His piercing eye could single out : She fell
 Trembling before him, from that hour made whole.
 The blind were often at his solemn word,
 Or instant touch, restor'd to sight ! The deaf

Heard !

Heard! and the dumb proclaim'd his wond'rous works!
 What wanted to confirm our staggering faith
 Was amply furnish'd, when at *Bethany*
 We saw our brother *Lazarus* was rais'd;
 Such works the LORD when living wrought: but, dead,
 What hope remains that *Israel* shall obtain
 The promises, by Prophets long foretold.

Thus talking on their way. Whom JESUS now
 O'ertook; but not in form as when he bore
 Our mortal nature; hence to them unknown.
 What things are these whereof ye now, thus sad,
 Commune together? They reply'd in brief.

Art Thou a stranger only, to inquire
 What Things have happen'd? Doubtless thou hast heard
Jesus of Nazareth, a man approv'd
 To all the people, both by signs from *Heav'n*,
 And works of mercy which he wrought, is not.
 Our rulers have deliver'd him to death,
 Three Days since buried; tho' by him we hop'd

Salva-

Salvation. Certain women too have seen
Angels, who now affirm that He is risen.

Kindling with seeming zeal, and yet conceal'd,
He answer'd, " Fools! and slow to apprehend
" The scriptures! thus it well becometh CHRIST
" To suffer, ere he reigns. When *Moses* saith,
" A Prophet like to me shall God raise up,
" Shall not CHRIST first, like him, of no account
" Be deem'd? Like *Joseph* by his brethren sold?
" Like *Jacob* forced from the heritage?
" Or *David* chas'd by *Saul* from hill to hill?
" Like *Job* afflicted? Was not *Daniel* cast
" To lions? and *Elias* forc'd to fly
" The wrath of *Jezebel*, who sought to slay
" Twice fifty *Prophets* hid in caves, and fed
" With bread and water? Thro' much suff'ring thus
" We gain perfection. What *Esaïas* saith
" Remark ye not, or *David* in the Psalms,
" Speaking of CHRIST? The *Prophets* all agree,
" That thus it must be, ere *Messiah* reigns.

Explain-

E.

Explaining thus the sacred oracles,
 Attention held them mute, now ere they wist
 Ent'ring the village. Here they stopp'd : his way
 Still holding on; and now, as half constrain'd,
 He turn'd aside at their request. The host
 Set bread, which JESUS took and brake, in act
 To bless, as when he held the supper; hence
 Discern'd, scarce known before He disappears.

Wonder and joy succeed, while each to each
 Confirms the vision. Doubtless it is He!
 Did not our hearts, as usual, when he spake,
 Burn at his presence He so well explain'd
 The scriptures? Up they rose, and on their way
 Trod lighter to the city. Joy elates
 Their breasts, dispelling grief and fullen care.

Arriv'd, they found the brethren overjoy'd,
 Who told what things had happen'd ; JESUS seen
 Alive by women, who his body fought :
 Of *Peter* then, and *John*. Now, while amaz'd

All

All hear their story, how he disappear'd,
 In breaking bread first known—Again confess'd
 He hails them; “Peace be to you!” They, afraid,
 Shrink from his presence; whom He thus bespoke.

“Fear not, 'tis I; no spirit; handle, see,
 “My hands and feet: have spirits flesh and bones?”
 Then shew'd his hands and feet, where yet the nails
 Rude marks had left, and where the spear had gor'd
 His side: for joy, while yet they hesitate,
 He call'd for food, and eat it up—Convinc'd,
 They now believ'd Him, while He farther spake:

“All pow'r, henceforth, to me, in Earth and Heav'n
 “Is now committed. That of which I spake
 “Ye see fulfill'd; the scriptures hence remain
 “Unbroken; what the *Prophets*, what the *Psalms*,
 “Relate concerning me, of which ye are
 “My witnesses.” He said, and disappear'd.

Rejoicing, they believ'd. But *Dydimus*,
 Then absent, held in doubt what they affirm'd—

Except

Except I see his hands and feet, and sides,
And handle these, I cannot think Him ris'n.

“Draw near,” again appearing, Jesus said,
“Behold my hands and feet; these, and my side,
“Handle, and be not faithless.” Unconvinc'd,
Till by the touch inform'd; he now exclaims,
“My Lord! and God!” not without cause rebuk'd
For unbelief. Nor vainly we expect
The promise, if, unseeing, we believe.

Those who receiv'd, and publish'd to the world
His resurrection, not unworthy liv'd
Of what they held. Their lives were innocent;
Their deaths heroic; breathing cordial love
To one another, not affecting state.
Well is the word receiv'd in them, who find
Like tempers, like conformity to those
Rejected of the world; but in their souls
Possessing joy and sweet content. His steps
They follow, nor shall miss of their reward.

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